

UK INTELLIGENCE AND SECURITY REPORT

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SIS Paramilitary/Covert Action Sections

"SIS had established a covert action or paramilitary capability before the war in the form of Section D. This had become one of the integral components of SOE in 1940. In the post war period SOE was abolished and many of its best officers and sections were to be absorbed back into SIS to become a new Special Operations Section in 1946, however it was officially named the Directorate of War Planning.

The D/WP was in fact a resurrected and expanded Section-D and was tasked with carrying out 'special operations' and creating stay-behind networks in Europe, plus developing a close liaison with Special Forces. Other parts of SOE were to be absorbed into H/TD and involved the more extensive training and development of equipment that had been pioneered by SOE during the war. Indeed the SOE officer John Munn became the first H/TD and saw the creation of Fort Monckton as one of a number of new specialist training centres very much in the SOE STS mould. DWP phased out quietly in 1953 though some form of 'special operations' capability was undoubtedly retained with the creation in late 1953-early 1954 of a covert political action group known as the Special Political Action Section (SPA)

Was to become heavily involved in deception, political influence operations and engineering changes in the leadership of foreign countries through rebellions such as the failed Indonesian Permesta rising of the late 1950's, insurgency, coups such as Iran in 1953 and the Congo in 1961 or perhaps by extreme 'executive action'. Within SIS the SPA was known as the 'jolly fun tricks department' and was directly controlled by the Head of R1. Thus the R1/SPA section was not an actual operational unit, but the originator and coordinator of operations mounted by the Directorate of production and any assets it used ranging from foreign mercenaries, 'former' Intelligence or special forces personnel, often used for 'deniable' operations, the SAS, IRD or any number of outside contracted specialists. The SPA would fall victim to the Labour Governments aversion to covert action and was quietly abolished in the mid 1970's. It was at this stage that the relationship with the SAS, seconded and retired, as well as a number of 'private' specialist companies became ever more important and by 1987 a Special Forces Directorate was formed to coordinate the activities of the SAS and SBS and ensure closer collaboration with the SIS. By 2003 such activities are the responsibility of the General Support Branch

Handles 'dirty operation' and uses The Increment as its executive arm. The so-called SIS Charter, known as the 'order book' requires that the service maintains a 'Special Operations' capability in addition to its more expected duties. The para-military or covert action option is provided by the 22 SAS CRW - Counter-Revolutionary Wing and the M (CT) Troop of the SBS and is supported by the RAF S & D Flight. The SAS CRW Increment would normally have around 45 highly trained specialists available for SIS requirements. All have a minimum of five years service in the SAS, are the rank of sergeant or above and have been heavily vetted by SIS. They will have gone through an induction course on surveillance and intelligence as well as three weeks at Fort Monckton. The SBS which provides a further 15 or so personnel, all of whom are expert divers, combat swimmers and underwater demolition experts, often with experience gained in the Comacchio Group, Mountain Leaders and the Arctic Warfare Cadre. Several have 'skippers tickets' and could command commercial vessels or fishing boats when required. The SBS Increment places tracking devices on 'suspect' vessels in ports around the world. They also control the SIS 'mini-submarine', an advanced form of chariot with two crew and upto four passengers. It is used for clandestine infiltration and exfiltration of agents. The RAF S&D has some ten or so specialist pilots allowed to fly below 50ft and can call upon a specially modified C130 Hercules for agent drops and 'quick' recovery operations and a Puma (or newer model) helicopter, equipped with additional fuel tanks, mainly used to ferry SIS staff around the UK and in particular for the shuttle between London (Battersea Heliport) and Fort Monckton. The Army's secretive FRU (agent running unit); 14th Intelligence & Security Company; Intelligence Corps and Royal Military Police all provide additional personnel for 'The Increment' including Women Officers. The 14th indeed provided surveillance for SAS 'snatch teams' in the Balkans attempting to arrest suspected War Criminals in the 1990's. Defensive driving courses have been provided by the RMP at HMS Daedalus (a naval airfield near Fort Monckton) while field training and toughening-up courses are held at the SAS Pontrilas area in Wales and jointly with the Italian SISMI Intelligence Service in Rome.

Has a Command Centre in the secure basement at Vauxhall Cross

The dissident SIS officer Richard Tomlinson has publicly accused The Increment of being involved in SIS sponsored plans to assassinate foreign leaders including Serbia's Slobodan Milosevic. In 1998 Tomlinson confirmed the existence of the unit which he described as 'a small cell of the SAS and SBS which is especially selected and trained to carry out operations exclusively for MI5/MI6' and indeed of a written assassination plan. He claimed that the document proposed three methods of assassinating Milosevic. The first method was to train and equip a Serbian paramilitary opposition group to assassinate Milosevic in Serbia. An MI6 Officer, Nick Fishwick, argued that this method would have the advantage of deniability, but with the disadvantage that control of the operation would be low and the chances of success unpredictable. The second method was to use The Increment to infiltrate Serbia and attack Milosevic either with a bomb or sniper ambush. The MI6 officer argued that this plan would be the most reliable, but would be undeniable if it went wrong. Fishwick's third proposal was to kill Milosevic in a staged car crash, possibly during one of his visits to the ICFY (International Conference on the Former Yugoslavia) in Geneva, Switzerland. Chillingly the MI6 Officer even provided a suggestion about how this could be done, namely disorientating Milosevic's chauffeur using a blinding strobe light as the cavalcade passed through one of Geneva's motorway tunnels. Whatever the truth of such stories The Increment has been used as the covert 'strong-arm' of the Intelligence Service since the downgrading of its own military capability in the 1970's. Operations against terrorist threats to Intelligence officers and facilities and providing protection for senior officers are certainly part of their remit.

However, the SIS also now directly employs a considerable number of former members of the SAS, SBS and 14th Intelligence Detachment of Military Intelligence and SIS has now decided, in the wake of the terrorist attacks in September 2001, to recreate some form of Special Operations department.

By early 2003 had recruited some 200 additional recently retired special forces personnel to greatly expand its own 'Covert Action' and overseas protection capability, along with as many as 100 Analysts and Linguists, and up to 200 additional admin/support staff for general intelligence duties. SIS also has a small group of perhaps 20-30 men and women known as UKN, mostly volunteers from outside organizations including private business who provide expert surveillance and counter-surveillance skills and training, as well as specialist computer and IT knowledge. The UKN are often used alongside The Increment for covert operations.

Natural Cover Committee:

UKA(E), UKB(W), UKC(Africa, RSA), UKD(ME), UKJ(Japan), UKO(India & Pakistan) and UKP(Iran) 1990's

A historical review of SIS facilities include;

Hotel Metropol, Northumberland Avenue, London WC2. 1909-1913

2 Whitehall Court, London SW1. (MO/MI-IC) 1913-1923

1 Melbury Road, near Kensington High Street, London W14. (SIS) 1923-1925

Broadway Buildings, 54 The Broadway, London SW1 (SIS) 1925-1966

Century House, 100 Westminster Bridge Road, London SE1 (SIS) 1966-1995 (071 928 5600/CBX 3501)

Vauxhall Cross, 85 Albert Embankment, London SE1 7TP (SIS) 1995-

